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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Chairman of Special Commission on disarmament of Iraq says latest report is fundamentally positive, notwithstanding recent events.

+ Myanmar says human rights cannot be violated behind barrier of non-interference, but should not be used for political ends; Uganda, Zambia, Trinidad and Tobago and Belarus among other speakers in General Assembly's general debate.

+ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines says international community must take forceful steps to combat drug trafficking; Mongolia, Bahamas, Chad, Equitorial Guinea and Bhutan also speak in yesterday's general debate.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee recommends that General Assembly authorize Secretary-General to commit $5.6 million for ONUSAL up to 30 November.

+ Special Political and Decolonization Committee elects Vice-Chairmen and hears petitioners on questions of Gibraltar and Guam.

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The Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, Rolf Ekeus, today said the latest report on measures to implement the plan for ongoing monitoring and verification of that country's facilities was fundamentally positive. He told correspondents at Headquarters that the system for monitoring and verification was provisionally operational, and that testing of its thoroughness and efficacy had begun. The six-month report, which would probably be discussed by the Council on Thursday, marked a very important stage in the evolution of the Commission's mandate.

Mr. Ekeus said the report had considerable significance in light of recent events. However, it was difficult to say how it would play into the political situation. The recent actions by Iraq gave cause for concern, and called into question the credibility of its stated intention to cooperate with the United Nations. He went on to say that the Special Commission had

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accounted for all of Iraq's long-range missiles, and that the country could not threaten the region with chemical weapons.

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Myanmar's Foreign Minister, Ohn Gyaw, told the General Assembly today that security and peace would be realized through development. In an era of growing globalization and interdependence, concerted efforts were needed to resolve economic and social problems. He supported the call made by the "Group of 77" developing countries and the Non-Aligned Movement for the Assembly to resume the stalled North-South dialogue. A constructive dialogue based on common interests and mutual benefits should enhance international economic cooperation and development.

Myanmar upheld and adhered to the basic norms of human rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter, he said. The principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs should be respected by all States. Attempts to use human rights to encroach on domestic jurisdictions should be avoided. Even as the international community sought universality of human rights, historical, cultural and religious diversity must not be forgotten. Human rights could not be violated behind the barrier of non-interference, but should not be used for political ends. While Myanmar was in the midst of transforming itself to a multi-party democracy with a market economy, the interests of the whole population must take precedence over the interests of the individual. Confrontation and incitement to instability must be avoided while the nation was in the process of reconciliation and reconsolidation.

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Paul Ssemogerere, Uganda's Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, noted that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had estimated the number of refugees and displaced persons worldwide at over 23 million and 26 million respectively. Africa accounted for a third of the total while Asia accounted for more than a quarter. The problem largely resulted from conflicts within nations. As a result, he welcomed the high priority given by the United Nations to the resolution of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. Uganda was committed to making the Organization of African Unity (OAU) conflict-prevention mechanism effective.

Global economic trends continued to weigh against many developing countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa, he continued. External debt was a major impediment to development. For example, Uganda had a total external public sector debt of $2.9 billion -- more than 80 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Debt servicing cost $185 million -- almost 76 per cent of export earnings. The debt problem was aggravated by unfavorable terms of trade and the harmful socio-economic effects of stringent economic reforms. For economic reforms to succeed in countries like Uganda, creditors should take measures to reduce indebtedness, including substantial debt cancellation or conversion into grants and other innovative schemes.

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Zambian Foreign Minister Remmy Mushota said the achievement of majority rule in South Africa was the most positive development in the past year. Substantial international assistance was needed to consolidate democracy and to address the negative social and economic legacy of apartheid. A democratic, peaceful and prosperous South Africa would benefit southern Africa and the continent as a whole. He welcomed the peaceful resolution of the territorial dispute between Chad and Libya, and the positive developments in Burundi. He also commended the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) for their commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the war in that country.

Those responsible for the genocide in Rwanda should be brought to trial through an international tribunal, he said. Peace, security and stability should be established to facilitate the repatriation of refugees. Substantial assistance was needed for rehabilitation and reconstruction. He expressed regret at the delay in bringing the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) up to its authorized strength of 5,500 troops. African countries had been ready to send sufficient troops, but had been constrained by a lack of logistical support. Zambia had contributed civilian and military personnel, while the Zambian Peace Corps had raised funds to purchase medicines, food and other humanitarian supplies for displaced Rwandans.

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Ralph Maraj, Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, said regional cooperation was flowering through the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Andean Pact, the Central American Integration Movement, the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Rio Group, and the Organization of American States (OAS). This year, his country had established diplomatic relations with six countries in Latin America; it now had diplomatic relations with all the countries in the Western Hemisphere.

He welcomed the international cooperation in Haiti, and said the Caribbean region had a special responsibility towards that country. Trinidad and Tobago had contributed troops to the multinational force, and hoped that the talents and resourcefulness of Haitians could be channelled towards rebuilding their nation and fighting poverty. Meanwhile, Cuba and the United States should resolve their differences through dialogue. The Cuba-CARICOM Mixed Commission had been established with a view to that country's reintegration into the Hemisphere. Cuba had recently joined the Association of Caribbean States as a founding member. He welcomed the International Law Commission's approval of a draft statute for an international criminal court. No State could hope to address the problems of transnational crime, terrorism, drug abuse, drug trafficking and money laundering on its own.

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Prime Minister Mikhail Chygir of Belarus said that after decades of totalitarianism, his country was gradually returning freedom to its people. The adoption of a new Constitution and the first free presidential election were significant milestones for Belarus. However, it had inherited an economy with excessive military production and high internal and external debt. The situation was aggravated by the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and by drought this year. Belarus had drafted a programme to overcome the crisis which would form the basis of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His country planned full liberalization of trade and prices, privatization, and stabilization of the monetary system.

As the first State in history to voluntarily and unconditionally renounce nuclear weapons, Belarus supported the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, he said. It also favoured multilateral discussion on the regulation of the international arms market. Reducing nuclear and conventional arsenals required enourmous expenditures, and Belarus expected international support for that undertaking. He went on to say that the success of reforms in countries in transition would depend to a large extent on such support.

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Alpian Allen, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, told the General Assembly yesterday that the international community must respond more seriously to the problems of developing countries. Urgent consideration must be given to such measures as revitalizing growth and access to markets; reducing debt and the debt service burden; and increasing official development assistance (ODA). The role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for economic and social development must be strengthened. However, that did not mean creating new bureaucracies and institutions; it required reacting quickly to established needs.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines faced a major problem in addressing the illicit production, trafficking and consumption of drugs, he continued. The nature of the country, with its many bays and mountainous terrain, attracted many visitors and generated scarce foreign exchange, but worked against the war against the drug barons. Nevertheless, forceful steps had been taken to combat drug trafficking. His Government supported every measure taken by the United Nations to cope with the problem and called for continued efforts in that regard.

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Tserenpiliin Gombosuren, Mongolia's Foreign Minister, expressed the hope that the discussion on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development would lead to measures to combat poverty, the external debt burden and environmental degradation. Industrialized countries should allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance (ODA), while developing countries should allocate 20 per cent of their budgets for social

priorities. South-South cooperation was vital for the sustainable development and self-reliance of developing countries. The establishment of the "South Centre" could strengthen that cooperation.

Mongolia relied on the active support of the donor community and international organizations as it pursued reform, he said. Economic decline and inflation were being checked, and the currency was being stabilized. However, living standards continued to decline, while poverty and unemployment were rising. Regional peace and stability was also important, particularly for small states. The improvement of Russian-Chinese relations and cooperation was a positive development. Bold steps were needed to solve problems regarding the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1995. Meanwhile, non-nuclear-weapons States needed credible security assurances.

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Orville Turnquest, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General of The Bahamas, said the influx of Haitian refugees had stretched his country's education, health and welfare resources to the limit. He appreciated the General Assembly's recognition of the absolute need to respond forcibly to the brutality of the military dictatorship in Haiti. The international community must now dedicate sufficient funding and expertise to that country's economic reconstruction. Citing the situations in Haiti, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, he said the international community must address the root causes of crises. The real threat to future security was no longer military aggression but deteriorating economic conditions.

Regarding the restructuring of the United Nations, he said it was essential that the Security Council reflect as accurately as possible the wishes of the entire international community. The Council's composition should reflect regional diversity so as to enhance the legitimacy of its actions. He went on to say that it was the Organization's duty to facilitate the efforts of small States to arrive at just and equitable solutions to international differences. That was especially important when such differences involved political and economic giants. In that regard, the Bahamas supported a review of the Republic of China's exclusion from United Nations membership.

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Ahmat Abderamane Haggar, Chad's Foreign Minister, said the various United Nations initiatives and conferences on development, including the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development, deserved special consideration at the Assembly's current session. External debt, falling commodity prices and the problem of market access caused serious difficulties for developing countries, particularly those in Africa. Those concerns would be an important part of the agenda for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

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The process of democratization was continuing in Chad, he went on to say. A framework agreement had been consolidated to include collaboration on the framing of a constitution, the facilitation of elections and the establishment of the Committee for National Reconciliation. Progress had also been made on the protection of human rights. In the last four years, independent newspapers had been established and political parties and unions had been organized. However, a campaign of false information had been launched by certain forces which were distorting the facts about the process of democratization. He invited non-governmental organizations and others to come to Chad to see what the Government was doing. Noting that Chad's border dispute with Libya had been resolved by the International Court of Justice, he said the victory of negotiation over confrontation was a sign of hope.

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Don Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, said the United Nations remained the ideal framework for resolving complex international problems. His country was maintaining a policy of good neighbourliness towards others in the region. It had also been strengthening structures that guaranteed political and other freedoms. Laws had been enacted to allow for the democratization process, and 14 political organizations were now operating freely. There were also laws covering freedom of expression and religion. Equatorial Guinea was today a free, democratic and independent country where peace and stability prevailed.

The solidarity of the industrialized countries was needed to resolve the debt crisis of the developing countries, he continued. Debt conversion was one option to be considered. The developed countries were responsible for the deteriorating ecosystem, and should provide compensation to countries which were being asked not to utilize their natural resources in order to protect the environment. He went on to say that his country was giving the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) epidemic due attention, but that more support from the international community was necessary.

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Ugyen Tshering of Bhutan said his country supported the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) beyond 1995 and the negotiation of a comprehensive test ban. He urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to continue negotiations on the nuclear issue and to comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement. He also urged all States to participate in the United Nations Arms Register of Conventional Weapons, adding that it should be expanded to cover not only trade, but manufacture and stockpiling.

The relationship between the General Assembly and other United Nations organs must be placed in proper perspective, he continued. It was a mistake to think that the Assembly and the Security Council functioned like the legislature and the executive of a government. In reality, the Council was the only body of authority in the United Nations, and the Assembly was explicitly forbidden to interfere in its work unless so requested. The case

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for reform was overwhelming. The Council must be expanded to reflect the new realities and to make it more representative. Deeper structural flaws must be addressed to make it more accountable.

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The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) today recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to commit $5.6 million gross ($5 million net) for the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for the period to 30 November. It took that action without a vote, after deliberating on the financing of the Mission and on the scale of assessments for apportioning United Nations expenses.

By the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would express concern over the lack of reporting on the Mission's performance, and request the Secretary-General to present a report for the period 1 December 1993 to 31 May 1994. It would also ask for a response to the request by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for a clear analysis of police and civilian personnel needs.

During discussions on the scale of assessments, Indonesia said it opposed the use of the purchasing power parity method to calculate the scale of assessments. The method had been developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its own uses. The present use of market exchange rates was the best way to compare national incomes. However, Malaysia said that the use of exchange rates in calculating national incomes and converting them to United States dollars could lead to distortions. Exchange rates could be volatile and did not reflect the purchasing power of currencies.

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The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) today elected Utula Utuoc Samana (Papua New Guinea) and Abelardo Moreno-Fernandez (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen, and heard petitioners on the questions of Gibraltar and Guam.

Joe Bossano, Chief Minister of Gibraltar, said there was no hope of achieving decolonization through negotiations between the United Kingdom, the colonial Power, and Spain, which sought to annex Gibraltar, unless the people's right to self-determination were respected. The proposed resolution on Gibraltar, which only called for negotiations between the two Powers, was an effort to qualify the United Nations commitment to decolonization and self-determination.

Petitioners on the question of Guam opposed the "in-migration" policy of the United States, the administering Power, which had resulted in the Chamorro people becoming a minority in their own homeland. They also objected to that Power's land policies, which had resulted in its owning over one third of the island.

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